

Teachers of Year knew their careers at early age

CT courier-tribune.com/news/local/teachers-year-knew-their-careers-early-age

By Kathi Keys kkeys@courier-tribune.com Twitter: @KathiKeysCT

May 19, 2016 - 5:36pm

ASHEBORO — Brooke Barham and Adam Reeder are passionate about their respective roles as teachers and the impact they're having on their students.

Brooke Barham, a third-grade teacher at Trindale Elementary School, is the 2016-17 Randolph County School System Teacher of the Year.

Adam Reeder, math teacher at Asheboro High School, is Asheboro City Schools' 2016-17 Teacher of the Year.

Their selections were announced at the 19th annual Teacher of the Year Award Banquet held Wednesday night at Pinewood Country Club. This tradition of both local school systems honoring their teachers together began in 1998.

Thirty-eight of Barham's and Reeder's colleagues from the two school systems were also honored at the banquet. All 40 were chosen by their peers to be Teachers of the Year at their respective schools.

Both Barham and Reeder received a \$500 cash award and plaque and will vie for the Piedmont Triad/Central Region's Teacher of the Year during the upcoming school year. One of the state's Regional Teachers of the Year will become N.C. Teacher of the Year next spring.

Teacher of the Year runners-up for each school system received \$250. Jennifer Brumley, reading specialist at Guy B. Teachey Elementary School, was announced Tuesday night as Asheboro's runner-up.

Randolph's other finalists were released earlier and included, in addition to Barham, Heather Leiber Clark, a first- and second-grade combination teacher at Coleridge Elementary; Lindsey Gallagher, chorus teacher at Eastern Randolph High; Adam Brown, eighth-grade social studies teacher at Northeastern Randolph Middle; and Lee Miller, ninth-grade world history teacher at Providence Grove High.

Randolph Teacher

Brooke Barham has been teaching third grade for six years at Trindale Elementary, although she took a maternity leave this school year for the birth of her son, Reid, who was born Sept. 10.

"Third grade is where my heart belongs," she said about her decision to teach at this elementary level. Coincidentally, she decided when she was in third grade that she would be a teacher and didn't heed advice about getting a higher paying job. "Children are my passion."

She related an example of a classroom occurrence during which she told her students that her husband, Blair, couldn't remember his wedding vows when they were married. A third-grader spoke up, amazed that her teacher's husband did not know the "a, e, i, o ..." vowels. "At the end of the day, we all have moments like that."

She still lives in Davidson County, where she grew up and graduated from Ledford High School. She received her bachelor's degree from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and student taught at Randolph's Hopewell Elementary to become familiar with the local school district. She drives by three other elementary schools on her way to Trindale each day, noting "Randolph County Schools is the place to be."

Asheboro Teacher

Adam Reeder has spent his entire teaching career, since 2000, as a math teacher at Asheboro High.

He's a graduate of North Moore High School and earned his bachelor's degree from N.C. State University. He later received his master's from Appalachian State University and is a nationally board certified teacher.

Reeder decided when he was in middle school that he wanted to be a teacher and have the opportunity to help "mold and shape" students, particularly at the high school level where they're "on the cusp of being adults."

He said that "math has always been an interest of mine. It allows me to cultivate problem solving." He also said the subject has a lot of practical applications in life.

Reeder said, after his selection was announced, that he's appreciative of Asheboro City Schools for the continual professional development that's available for teachers.

And then he focused on the kids. "There's a potential in each of our students. It's up to us to cultivate that," he told the more than 100 in attendance.

Other Teachers

Two other teachers shared insights about the past year as their respective system's 2015-16 Teacher of the Year: Claudia Rodriguez, seventh-grade math teacher at North Asheboro Middle, for Asheboro City Schools, and Sherry Yahya, sixth-grade language arts teacher at Braxton Craven, for the Randolph County School System.

Rodriguez' comments focused on the need to address the increasing poverty in the community and the many opportunities which students have at NAMS, ones which give them a chance to grow. She also applauded the superintendent's reading challenge and said she wants individuals to be "reunited with books, not cellphones."

Yahya related a story using an apple to compare to a student, noting that her grandfather, when they prepared homemade applesauce, said there was always a piece worth saving even in a rotten one. Some apples, she said, could appear fine, but inside they're bruised or battered. "We're going to have kids come to us who are going to be bruised. On the outside they may be OK. I'm going to find what's good."

Both Asheboro Superintendent Dr. Terry Worrell and Randolph Superintendent Dr. Stephen Gainey presented their respective school-level Teachers of the Year and announced their school system Teachers of the Year.

This year's Teacher of the Year Award Banquet was made possible due to the sponsorship of Mark III Employee Benefits and Horace Mann.

Copyright ©[GateHouse Media, Inc.](#) 2016. All rights reserved. • [Privacy Policy](#)